

Adam S2X



Adam's SX series boast transducers, drivers and electronics redesigned from the S series. Huw Price feels the S2X appeal.

KEY FEATURES

- Active bass reflex speaker
- Woofer: 7-inch HexaCone
- Tweeter: X-ART
- Frequency response: 35Hz–50kHz
- Power: 300W HF, 100W LF
- Inputs: balanced XLR
- Dimensions: 220 x 370 x 320mm
- Weight: 10.8kg

MEASURING UP

These monitors are up there with the best we've tried so far, but at this price you can also consider a few others. The Genelec 8050APM (£2,960 pair) is a two-way active studio monitor with an 8-inch bass driver, 1-inch metal dome tweeter, Directivity Control Waveguide and 150 watts (LF)/120 watts (HF) power. Dynaudio's BM15A (£2,974) is another two-way nearfield active monitor with a 40Hz–22kHz frequency response and 200W (LF)/100W (HF) power for 124dB RMS.

S2X

Manufacturer **Adam**

Price **£2,450 pair**

Contact **Adam Audio 01992 525670**

Web **www.adam-audio.com**

Hooray for Adam because the well-spec'ed control panel is right there on the front of the S2X monitors. The S2X is part of Adam's new SX series, which is based on the well-established S series. Rather than being a simple upgrade, however, the SX series is described as 'a fundamental transformation'.

All the drive and electronics have been redesigned and all six models feature the new X-ART Accelerating Ribbon Technology tweeter, offering a 3dB higher maximum sound pressure level and an increase in frequency response up to 50kHz.

This means lower distortion, and the extra 4dB efficiency with this tweeter is more or less equivalent to doubling the power of an amplifier. A new broadband amplifier has been developed to accompany the X-ART tweeter for ultra-low distortion and 'an excellent damping factor'. The internal bandwidth exceeds 1MHz and it has been externally limited to deliver a response up to 300kHz.

The seven-inch HexaCone woofer has been redesigned, too. It has a larger and longer two-inch voice coil to achieve more linear excursion to handle higher SPL levels. Again, efficiency has

been improved through the use of a stronger magnetic structure, so with an onboard 300-watt amp for the woofer and a 100-watt amp for the tweeter, this should result in some serious volume.

Full frontal

There are six controls on the front panel. Input sensitivity is set using two controls – one for coarse settings (-20dB to

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+8dB) and a second for fine tuning in 0.5dB increments (from -1.5dB to 2dB). Two controls are also allocated for the lower frequencies. The first is an EQ set at 80Hz that boosts bass; the second is a shelf filter adjusting the frequency response below 150Hz. The two HF controls set the high-frequency volume from -2dB to +2dB and the shelf filter works above 6kHz.

Besides the S1X, all of the SX series speakers can also accommodate Adam's optional onboard digital converter. This operates at 24-bit/192kHz D/A with AES/EBU (XLR) and S/PDIF (RCA) inputs and includes a Right/Left/Mono switch.

Sonic sensation

We started off with a classical string quartet recording and let's just say right away that the S2Xs floored us. Several

adjectives spring to mind, so let's just print them out in no particular order – wide open, transparent, effortless, breathtakingly realistic, loud, dynamic, involving... We'll add more as and when they come to us.

If you close your eyes and continue listening, the S2Xs seem to 'disappear' almost entirely. By this we mean that you gradually become less aware that you're listening to speakers because they're like an open window on the music itself. Miniscule details on recordings that you thought you knew intimately will suddenly jump out at you, like the tiny percussive click of a fingerstyle guitarist's nails on the strings or the creak of a piano pedal.

Imaging is surgically precise and the sense of air around individual instruments helps to create an image that's both wide and deep without sacrificing the granite solidity of centrally panned instruments such as kick drums or vocals. The only thing that breaks the spell is a slight degree of audible turbulence around the port hole, but we noticed it only with extremely heavy electronic bass at fairly high volume.

Adam's technical department tells us that this has to be expected with small- and medium-size front-ported cabinets if you want to maintain a reasonably flat response right down to 40Hz. The alternative is to engineer a bass bump to create the illusion of extended lows,

but Adam declines to do this. On balance we think this is a reasonable argument and a foam port plug is available to cure the turbulence at the expense of a little bass. **MTM**

SUMMARY

WHY BUY

- Stunningly realistic sound quality
- Pinpoint imaging
- Solid and deep bass
- 5-year warranty

WALK ON BY

- Audible port turbulence below 60Hz

VERDICT

A near faultless monitor for rock, orchestral, jazz and acoustic music, but electronic bass pushes the cabinets a bit too far

